

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO AMCONSUL ASMARA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7534

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 14949

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ASEC ET

SUBJECT: SECURITY OF CONGEN ASMARA STAFF

REF: ASMARA 1031

1. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS ENTIRELY CONGEN'S CONCERN WITH IMPACT ON MORALE OF OUR REQUEST THAT CONGEN PERSONNEL REMAIN ON COMPOUND OVER NIGHT, BUT BELIEVES THAT AS KIDNAPPINGS STRIKE CLOSER TO HOME, SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER ALL ELSE. (WE NOTE, INCIDENTALLY, CONGEN'S STATEMENT THAT MORALE IS "ALREADY FRAYED." THIS IS CONTRARY TO IMPRESSION EMBOFFS, INCLUDING DCM HAVE RECEIVED DURING RECENT VISITS. MORALE HAS SEEMED TO US TO BE EXCELLENT. IF THIS NOT CASE WE WOULD APPRECIATE FURTHER INFO.)

2. FACT IS, AS CONGEN AWARE, THAT INSURGENTS HAVE OPERATED IN PAST IN IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF CONGEN AND ADJACENT EPMG MILITARY INSTALLATION AT TRACT ALPHA WITHOUT MUCH HINDRANCE. PRIOR TO MICHALKE CASE, KIDNAPPING OF AMERICANS IN THE CITY APPARENTLY NOT AN OBJECTIVE. HOWEVER, SITUATION HAS NOW CHANGED, AND WE KNOW OF NO WAY TO INSURE THAT SOME MEMBER OF CONGEN STAFF OVERNIGHTING OUTSIDE OF COMPOUND, PARTICULARLY ACTING PRINCIPAL OFFICER, MIGHT NOT BE NEXT.

3. WE WOULD NOT WISH SEE CONGEN PERSONNEL RESTRICTED TO COMPOUND ANY LONGER THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. ACCORDINGLY, WE SUGGEST THAT THE MATTER BE KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW.

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IF CONGEN CAN ARRANGE FOR MILITARY GUARDS IN RELATIVELY

SMALL AREA OF HOUSES OCCUPIED BY CONGEN PERSONNEL OUTSIDE OF COMPOUND (WAUCHOPE, POTTER, HAM, AND MARINES), WE WOULD OF COURSE WANT TO LOOK AT SITUATION IN LIGHT OF THAT DEVELOPMENT. FURTHER, IF CONGEN BELIEVES EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES HERE IN SUPPORT OF REQUEST FOR GUARDS OUTSIDE COMPOUND WOULD HELP, WE STAND READY TO WEIGH IN.

4. RE SUGGSTIONS PARA 6 REFTEL OUR THOUGHTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) EMBASSY HAS REPEATEDLY ENCOURAGED CONGEN PERSONNL TO VISIT ADDIS REGULARLY AT NO TRAVEL EXPENSE TO THEM. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. FOR DEPT: IS THERE ANY WAY TO INSTITUTE AN R&R ARRANGEMENT THAT WOULD PERMIT R&R EVERY TWO MONTHS OUTSIDE OF ETHIOPIA?

B) WE SHALL CERTAINLY GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO ANY MODIFICATION OF CONGEN COMPOUND DESIGNED TO IMPROVE AMENITIES FOR MORALE PURPOSES.

C) WE WOULD CONSIDER SYMPATHETICALLY ANY DOCUMENTED REQUEST FOR ABOLISHING SECRETARIAL POSITION. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT ANY SUCH REQUEST SHOULD BE MADE ONLY AFTER CONSULTATION WITH CONSUL GENERAL SHERRY WHO CURRENTLY IN STATES ON LEAVE AND WILL RETURN JAN. 13.

D) WE WOULD SUPPORT MAINTENANCE OF PRESENT LEASING ARRANGEMENTS.

E) AS INDICATED PARA 3 ABOVE, WE STAND READY SUPPORT CONGEN IN MAING SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WITH EPMG. HUMMEL

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